



Office of the Mayor

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*Contact: Mikki Dobski, Director of Communications & Special Projects, 235-5855 or 876-1564
Howard Buchanon, Fire Chief, 574-235-7553*

South Bend Fire Department's new and improved Rescue 1

Mayor Steve Luecke, Chief Howard Buchanon and members of the Fire Department and South Bend Common Council officially fired up the City's newest emergency apparatus – a brand new rig that was recently purchased, according to Mayor Luecke, “to upgrade the department's ability to provide search and rescue more safely and effectively.” The rig is equipped with state of the art technology, including significant improvements over the older model which it will be replacing at Central Fire Station on S. Michigan Street. “The City of South Bend is committed to providing our dedicated firefighters with the best equipment, tools, and training as they courageously work to save lives and property, everyday. Our department is one of the best in the State and one that our community can count on whenever and wherever the need occurs.”

The truck is longer than its predecessor and can hold 50% more equipment, a vital asset in light of recent equipment purchases and upgrades for the department. The South Bend Fire Department was awarded a federal Homeland Security grant for \$40,000 for new equipment. The focus of the purchase was primarily for extrication tools: spreaders, rams, airlifting bags, stabilizing bars, and glass master cutting tools. Portable power generators used to operate some of the heavier extrication tools were also purchased.

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Chief Buchanon pointed out that “the new vehicle also incorporates a number of new safety features to protect both the firefighters and their equipment in the event of collisions or other accidents while traveling to the scene of a fire. It also includes a small compartment inside the vehicle to allow firefighters needing to don specialized gear (i.e. diving equipment) to do so before reaching the scene.”

The truck has a state of the art air-fill system for quickly replenishing air tanks on site and an electric wench that can be positioned for use from all four sides of the vehicle for towing and removal of other obstacles. It is also equipped with a powerful universal light that can swivel in any direction for greater illumination at night.

The old Rescue 1 will be re-sold and the money will be used to upgrade fire-fighting equipment for the department. Extrication equipment from the rig will be removed and redistributed to Engine 10 at Station #10 on York Road near the bypass, and to Engine 11 at Station #11 on Bendix Road. These additions are intended to augment First Response capabilities at these two stations, particularly because they both service the bypass areas and are geographically the furthest north and south.

The truck has also been outfitted with a Tasmanian devil decal bearing the number “54”, the badge number of the late Jim Cole, who passed away in February of 2003. A revered veteran and “old salt” of the department, he served for many years in Rescue, where he attained the rank of captain and was eventually promoted to Fire 102B Battalion Chief. “The decal pays tribute to the memory of his tireless decades of work in the service of the city,” Chief Buchanon noted. Several retirees and former members of the South Bend Fire Department who served with Chief Cole were on hand for the ceremony.